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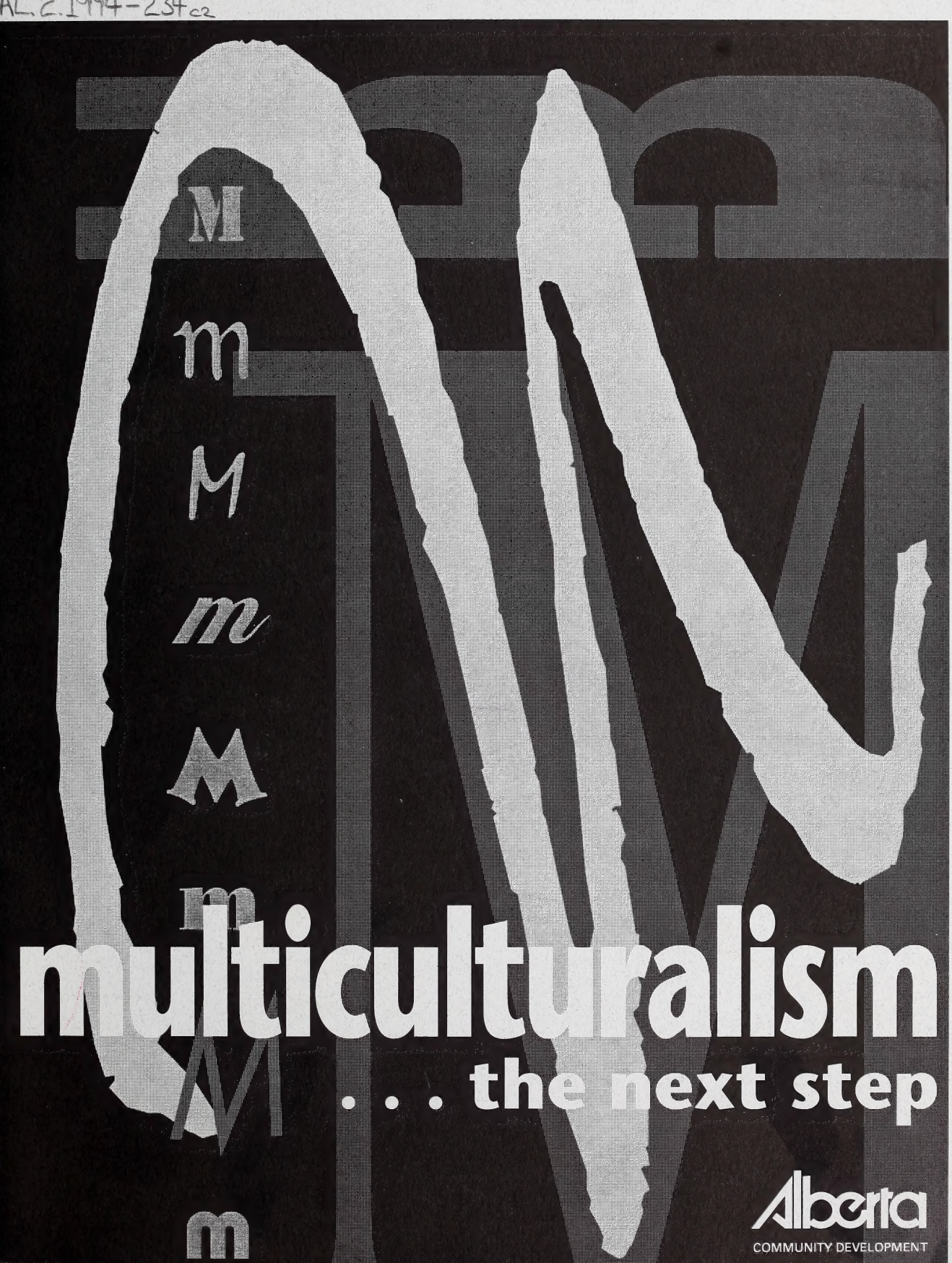

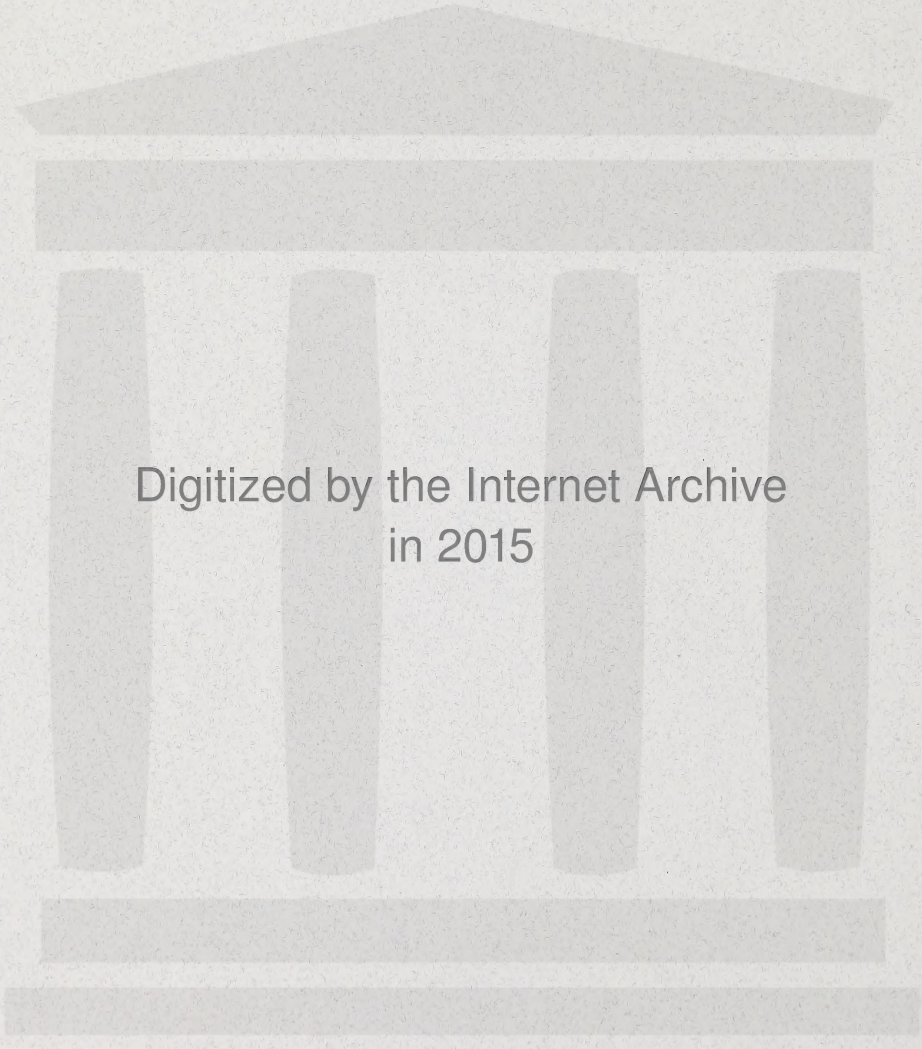
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Alberta Multiculturalism Commission

Three Year Strategic Plan 1994-1997

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Section I
The Plan

"As great optimists, we look on change not as threatening and uncertain, but as an exciting challenge to improve our society, while staying true to all that we hold dear as human beings,"

Speech from the Throne, August, 1993

Background

In 1988, Albertans told the Government of Alberta during a series of province-wide meetings that they wanted to live in a society that allowed citizens "to be true to themselves and their traditions". They said multiculturalism policy should encourage respect for, and integration of, all cultures. It should also ensure "every citizen has the same opportunities to achieve his or her hopes and dreams" - without racial or cultural prejudice. Such a policy would bring about a harmonious, culturally diverse society - and with it - significant economic and social benefits for the province.

The Government of Alberta implemented the recommendations put forward by Albertans, enacting the Alberta Multiculturalism Act in 1990. In 1991, the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission introduced a three-year Multiculturalism Action Plan (MAP) to blueprint how the Act's objectives would be accomplished.

MAP was designed to bring the vision of a harmonious, culturally diverse society closer to reality. It included three initiatives and a broad spectrum of programs designed to help citizens increase awareness of Alberta's culturally diverse nature, improve access to business and institutional opportunities and encourage full participation in all aspects of Alberta life.

This past fall, the Commission initiated an evaluation and input process called Review '93. The review asked Albertans three basic questions:

- Was MAP successful in achieving the Commission's objectives?
- Which diversity issues are of the most concern to Albertans today?
- What should the Commission focus upon in the future?

Review '93 involved nine dialogues and meetings. They were held during the fall of 1993 in seven different cities across Alberta. More than 500 people, representing a broad cross-section of Albertans, communities and organizations, attended the sessions. Several written submissions were received. Participants critiqued MAP's initiatives, discussed diversity issues and identified future strategies for the Commission.

"Albertans value the cultural and ethnic diversity in Canada. Multiculturalism policies should support the contributions of the various peoples to Canada and should be designed to eliminate racial and cultural discrimination. Immigration policies should focus on assisting individuals overcome barriers to achieve full participation in all aspects of Canadian society,"

Report of the Alberta Select Committee on Constitutional Reform

In addition to the input from Review '93, the Commission assessed its current programs, and took into account the current social, political, cultural and economic climate in Alberta. The Commission also considered other factors like the reality of Alberta's increasingly diverse population and the role cultural diversity can play in the province's future success.

Mandate

The mandate of the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission is to achieve the objectives set out in the Alberta Multiculturalism Act. The tenets of the Act are as valid today as they were in 1990:

- encourage respect for the multicultural heritage of Alberta;
- promote an awareness and understanding of the multicultural heritage of Alberta;
- foster an environment in which all Albertans can participate in and contribute to the cultural, social, economic and political life of Alberta;
- encourage all sectors of Alberta society to provide access to services and equality of opportunity.

As Alberta grows more and more culturally diverse, the Act's spirit and vision will take on even more importance in the future.

Context

"Alberta students need exposure to the world's people. Our students need to get interested in learning about other countries and understanding their ideas,"

Lorna Cammaert U of C Associate V-P, Student Affairs

Participants in the Review '93 process told the Commission that MAP's objectives of awareness, access and participation for all Albertans were still valid. They said many of our programs had worked well but perhaps more importantly, people said the work needed to continue if Alberta was to achieve a society where everyone's contribution was valued and respected.

Several common themes and concerns emerged from the discussions - racism, government's commitment to multiculturalism and leadership, cultural barriers - but the overriding feeling was that education was the key strategy to address these issues and concerns. Participants told us that if Alberta was ever to become a society that sees diversity as a strength, we must improve awareness and understanding of the valuable contribution diversity makes to Alberta's economic, social and cultural well-being.

"If we achieve the Awareness and Access objectives, Participation will follow,"

Review '93 participant

In developing a new strategic plan, the Commission Board wished to build on the successes and strengths of MAP. Among other things, MAP proved that partnerships with businesses, institutions, groups and communities in program development and delivery were effective ways of addressing 'grassroots' needs. The last three years also showed that the Commission can play a key role as a coordinating body between government and other groups in bringing about change.

Understanding the benefits of diversity, and nurturing the full potential of our multicultural society, presents a tremendous challenge and opportunity for Alberta businesses, institutions and communities. Our province's diversity enables us to find and secure export markets and helps to attract investment and tourism here. The Commission has a responsibility, as an agency of government, to plan strategies for the future that will capitalize on this "Alberta advantage".

"Some people think multiculturalism is a real problem. To them, multiculturalism is a threat. In fact, it is one of the greatest competitive advantages we could have. Quite simply, multiculturalism is the internal globalization of Canada. And it will be one of the key factors contributing to our ability, to our sense of confidence that we can succeed in the global economy of the future,"

John Cleghorn, President, Royal Bank of Canada

Key factors that will continue to influence the work of the Commission include:

- Some Albertans still hold negative attitudes towards people from different cultures and backgrounds;
- Many Albertans continue to hold the incorrect belief that the primary focus of the Commission is to fund ethnocultural communities to retain their traditions;
- Many Albertans fear that economic uncertainty and social change will heighten racism and discrimination;
- Government needs to show strong leadership and commitment to the ideals and benefits of a culturally diverse society;
- Diversity programs can and should be community-based, community-driven, and community supported;
- Changes in Government policies and roles are redefining the way government departments and agencies do business;
- Alberta will continue to grow more culturally diverse;
- Changes in provincial, national and global economies demand that individuals and organizations develop abilities and skills in valuing and accommodating diversity;
- Skill in managing diversity is an "Alberta advantage".

In developing this plan, the Commission considered all of the issues facing Albertans today. The plan follows in the footsteps of the Government of Alberta's desire, as outlined in the 1994 Speech from the Throne, to "find new and better ways to conduct the business of government." MAP was a strong first step for the Commission. This strategic plan builds on that foundation and will guide the Commission's activities for the next three years, beginning April 1, 1994.

"Diversity happens! Deal With It!"

Slogan suggestion from Review '93 participant

Vision

The vision of the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission is for Alberta to be a harmonious, culturally diverse province which includes all of its citizens in its economic, social, political, and cultural opportunities and benefits.

Mission

Our mission is to ensure that every Albertan has an equal opportunity to contribute to and benefit from every aspect of Alberta society.

Goals and Objectives

Based on the community's input and the various factors influencing multiculturalism policy in Alberta today, the Commission has developed a number of goals and objectives to guide its activities during the next three years.

GOAL:
Eliminate racism and discrimination in Alberta.

OBJECTIVES:

1) Develop, in partnership with others, a comprehensive strategy to eliminate racism through school and community-based programs. Implement the strategy by September, 1995.

2) Develop, in partnership with others, strategies for on-going and sustainable organizational change to reduce barriers in government departments and organizations in the public and private sectors. Draft and implement these strategies by June, 1995.

"The greater the diversity in a working team, the greater chance it has of creating innovative breakthroughs. Our citizens' ethnic origins can be utilized to weave an international network of trade and goodwill,"

Sadruddin Boga, advisor to the Multicultural Association of Fort McMurray

"It (quality services) means government putting more responsibility in the hands of Albertans, not standing in the way of creative solutions,"

Premier Ralph Klein

GOAL:

Achieve an understanding of, and a commitment to, valuing cultural diversity within government and among all Albertans.

OBJECTIVES:

1) Develop an awareness campaign, in conjunction with the province's media community and corporate sector, clarifying Alberta's multiculturalism policy and promoting the benefits of a culturally diverse society. Launch the campaign in September, 1995.

2) Assist Albertans to articulate and promote a Canadian identity that values fairness, respect, acceptance, and equal opportunity for all, by establishing an on-going series of interactive discussions, seminars and forums. Begin the series by October, 1994.

3) Increase service effectiveness in government by coordinating the efforts of all departments and agencies with crossover mandates in cultural diversity programming. Implement an action plan by June, 1995.

4) Complement government's change to a customer focused approach by introducing managing diversity initiatives to government departments and agencies by January, 1996.

5) Support human resource development in cultural diversity issues management by developing and implementing, by December, 1994, a province-wide communications and information network which regularly distributes and exchanges information among individuals, communities and organizations.

"• Innovation Enterprise
• Partnerships & Collaboration
• Caring Society & Quality of Life,"

Fundamental principles of Towards 2000 Together - Government of Alberta discussion paper

GOAL:

Promote community leadership and self-sufficiency in diversity planning and programming.

OBJECTIVES:

1) Create, by April, 1996, a sustainable network of Albertans and Alberta organizations who can demonstrate and "champion" the value and benefits of cultural diversity to their peers within industry, institutions and communities.

2) Equip individuals and organizations in the community, by December, 1996, with the necessary skills to develop and administer cultural diversity programs.

3) Establish, by April, 1997, community-based and operated resources with the expertise to advise and assist Alberta communities, organizations and industries in diversity planning, development and program delivery.

4) Transfer, by April, 1997, the Commission's program development and delivery functions to community organizations and the business community.

5) Develop a marketing arm of the Commission which would increase the accessibility, attractiveness and cost-recovery potential of programs and services offered by the Commission and its partners. Operational by 1995, this marketing function would generate up to $100,000 in revenue in fiscal 1996/97.

Deadlines for Objectives by Year

1994

October

- Establishment of an ongoing series of interactive discussions, seminars and forums to assist Albertans to articulate and promote a Canadian identity that values fairness, acceptance and equal opportunity for all.

December

- Support human resource development in cultural diversity issues management by developing and implementing a province-wide communications and information network which regularly distributes and exchanges information among individuals, communities and organizations

1995

January

- Develop a marketing arm of the Commission which would increase the accessibility, attractiveness and cost-recovery potential of programs and services offered by the Commission and its partners.

June

- Implement an action plan to increase service effectiveness in government by coordinating the efforts of all departments and agencies with crossover mandate in cultural diversity programming.

September

- Develop, in partnership with others, a comprehensive strategy to eliminate racism through school and community-based programs.
- Launch an awareness campaign, in conjunction with the province's media community and corporate sector, clarifying Alberta's multiculturalism policy and promoting the benefits of culturally diverse society.

1996

January

- Complement government's change to a customer focused approach by introducing managing diversity initiatives to government departments and agencies.

April

- Create a sustainable network of Albertan and Alberta organizations who can demonstrate and "champion" the value and benefits of cultural diversity to their peers within industry, institutions, and communities.

December

- Equip individuals and organizations in the community with the necessary skills to develop and administer cultural diversity programs.

1997

April

- Establish a community-based and operated resource with the expertise to advise and assist Alberta industries and communities in diversity planning, resource development and program delivery.
- Transfer the Commission's program development and delivery functions to community organizations and the business community.

May

- The Commission continues within government as an internal policy advisor and a community advocate for fair and equitable practises which value diversity.

"For the sake of ourselves, our children and our grandchildren, we have to not just promote multiculturalism but live in a multicultural way,"
Review '93 participant

The Commission will achieve these goals and objectives by following these principles:

1. Empowering partners to deliver programs through training, support and resources.

2. Improving communications and awareness about government's multiculturalism policy and the benefits of a culturally diverse society.

3. Maintaining the Commission's catalytic role as the province's foremost authority on diversity policy, programs and information.

Commission's Role

The Commission must assume a greater leadership, coordinating and facilitating role. We must continue to narrow the focus of our current activities and concentrate on only those initiatives which have a direct impact on achieving our goals. We must also set the stage for more community involvement in the delivery of diversity programs by giving organizations and groups the training and tools they need to assume that responsibility.

"Government leaders need to be more visible and loud about the value and benefits of multiculturalism,"
Review '93 participant

As a strategic leader, rather than a 'doer' of programs, our primary role will be to inform, advise and guide government departments, organizations and community groups in implementing diversity initiatives that are in the best interests of Albertans.

In order to do this, it is imperative that the Commission be given the expanded authority and autonomy within government to effect change. Increased authority and autonomy will provide us with the flexibility we need to accomplish the goals and objectives set out in this plan and demonstrate to Albertans government's renewed leadership and commitment to a culturally diverse society.

"Our economic strength and social well-being are at risk unless we find new ways to address and solve the challenges of an increasingly complex world,"

Seizing Opportunity, Alberta's New Economic Development Strategy

"Stakeholders buy-in is critical,"

Review '93 participant

Our advisory role within government will include showing elected officials, departments and agencies ways in which they can lead by example as role models for other Albertans. In achieving its goals and objectives, the Commission, where appropriate, will collaborate with other government departments and agencies. Ongoing responsibility for initiatives that are best dealt with by other government jurisdictions - like school-based anti-racism programming - will be transferred to those areas following a period of transition.

The Future - 1997 And Beyond

By 1997, the Commission will have firmly established its facilitating role and will have empowered others by providing training and resources to conduct cultural diversity initiatives. Extensive consultations with the community will have taken place and preparations laid to transfer our program development and delivery functions to a community-based model.

Moving to a community-based program delivery is consistent with the concept of customer-driven government. It also places ownership of bringing about cultural understanding and acceptance at the most appropriate level - where resolving conflict or encouraging harmony has the greatest impact.

The transition will be completed by April 1, 1997. The community-based resource will include a core of funds and expertise that provide diversity planning and program support to Alberta industries, institutions and communities. This core of resources will be operated and controlled by an autonomous Board of Directors drawn from government, industry and the public-at-large.

To be viable, a community program delivery model will require start-up resources, advice and guidance. Initially, these resources should be provided by the Government of Alberta. Resources would be replenished and sustained through private sector and community sponsorships and from revenue generated through the marketing of programs. The Commission will provide advice and guidance as required.

"This government will continue to listen to Albertans; to put people first; and to stay true to their traditional values,"

Speech from the Throne, February, 1994

The transition will not diminish government's responsibility to achieve a harmonious society for the benefit of all Albertans. The Alberta Multiculturalism Act will remain in place and the Commission will continue within government as a policy advisor and a community advocate for fair and equitable practices which value diversity.

Conclusion

Alberta has been a leader in diversity programming in Canada since 1972. This plan reaffirms and continues Alberta's leadership in this critical area. It refocuses the Commission's efforts and enables us to take a giant step forward in meeting the Alberta Multiculturalism Act's prime directives. It will empower communities and organizations to take ownership of diversity initiatives and ensure provincial government multiculturalism policy fosters economic growth, social development and the bringing together of Alberta communities well into the 21st century.

Section II

Review '93 Input & Issues

"Canadians take significant pride in what they perceive as a fair and inclusive society. Any indications or signs of incursions to such fairness and inclusiveness is not only a source of anxiety and fear, but an indication of an erosion of the perceived strength of our society,"

Decima Research report to the Canadian council of Christians and Jews

Review '93 participants welcomed the opportunity to provide their input to the Commission and outline the issues they felt should be the focus of future government activity in the area of multiculturalism. And although participants were separated by hundreds of miles and enjoyed completely different lifestyles, the issues and concerns brought to the table at the dialogues and meetings were quite similar.

Many of the issues, like racism and discrimination, require long-term and well-coordinated solutions. Other concerns, such as awareness through education, require strong leadership, commitment and cooperation to overcome.

Racism

Participants stressed that a significant number of Albertans still held negative attitudes about people from different cultures and backgrounds. This opinion is supported by two national polls recently conducted by Decima Research. In an October, 1993 poll done for the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, half of the 1,200 respondents admitted that they harbour negative views of some minorities - even though they insisted they would never act on or express those views. In a separate survey conducted a month later for MacLean's and CTV, 26% of Albertans considered themselves racially intolerant. Surveys conducted over the past year by Canada's immigration department reveal 50% of Canadians harbour intolerant or openly hostile views towards immigrants. This attitude indicates the public lacks knowledge about immigration's benefits, said **Review '93** participants.

Most immigrants bring skills, investment and a penchant for hard work that enriches Canada and Alberta socially and economically. A better coordinated system which bridged the communications gap between new immigrants and established citizens was seen as a way to lessen the trauma experienced in some Alberta communities and help new immigrants integrate more smoothly into Alberta society.

"Society is only as successful as its ability to defend its minorities,"
Review '93 participant

The fear of heightened racism and discrimination, spurred by economic and social pressures, was uppermost in people's minds. Racism and discrimination were seen as serious impediments to Alberta's economic and social growth. The Commission was told these issues would require well-coordinated, long-term solutions to be overcome.

It was pointed out that other government agencies, like the Alberta Human Rights Commission, have similar mandates to prevent racism and discrimination. The Commission should link its awareness efforts with provincial and federal government agencies and community groups, where appropriate, to maximize resources and public impact.

Communication

"Alberta will only realize its full economic and social potential if all Albertans are provided with a fair and equal opportunity to fully develop and challenge their individual talents and abilities,"
Towards 2000 Together - Government of Alberta discussion paper

During the past three years, the Commission's positive messages about cultural diversity were heard or seen by more than half-a-million Albertans. Review '93 participants said this effort was admirable but suggested many of the Commission's programs and services were still not well-known to Albertans.

A lack of objective measurement for many of the Commission programs and services, made it unclear which programs worked better than others. We were called upon to build performance indicators into future programs and communicate these results. This documentation would allow for improved information-sharing and collaboration between the Commission and our partners.

A large number of Albertans still mistakenly believe the Government of Alberta funds ethnocultural communities to retain their traditions. This misunderstanding engenders we/they attitudes in various communities, ill-feeling towards cultural groups, and discriminatory behaviours against minorities. We were urged to expand our communications efforts, using the media as a partner to more effectively 'spread the word' about the benefits of diversity.

"Cultural diversity is an asset. As such, culture needs to be retained and maintained or it will be lost,"

Lloyd Sereda, president Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Lethbridge Branch

There was considerable debate over the merits of continuing to use the term 'multiculturalism' because of its often negative connotation. The majority, however, saw terminology as secondary to effectively dealing with diversity issues. If provincial government leadership and commitment were sustained over time - and greater public sector/private business interaction was encouraged - it was believed a united, harmonious society would emerge. Although participants discussed a variety of possible terms that could be used to describe that goal, the preference was clearly to keep the word multiculturalism as the descriptor.

Individuals, communities and organizations throughout the province said the Commission's mandate of helping people participate fully in society should continue. Cultural retention activities by ethnocultural communities are important and should be valued as part of Alberta's cultural mosaic and rich heritage, said participants. However, we were urged to allocate future funding support only to projects and programs that could demonstrate they are helping Alberta or Albertans build a society which values its diversity.

Leadership

"It would be good to see government walk the talk, but I haven't even seen government talk the talk,"

Review '93 participant

Review '93 participants said the Government of Alberta needs to demonstrate more leadership and commitment to the ideals of a culturally diverse society. We were told uninformed and improper comments about multiculturalism from Albertans in positions of authority contributed to negative behaviours and attitudes exhibited by many Albertans.

Participants said the Premier and other key figures in government influence public opinion through their words and actions. It is important, therefore, that these individuals consistently express - privately and publicly - their belief that Alberta is a better place to live because of the diversity that exists here.

"It is time for us to diversify our methods in achieving cultural harmony...We must develop an approach to reach the grassroots of the society,"

Edmonton Chinatown Multi-Cultural Centre

"Motivation to breakdown barriers instead of ignoring them comes from the value people with different backgrounds bring to the organization, not from sticks and stones,"

Review '93 participant

Elected officials and civil servants must believe diversity is a strength - not a weakness - if a similar level of awareness and understanding is to be expected from others in society, said participants. This should be done through an across-the-board, educational process. Once this occurs, MLAs, government departments and agencies would be able to lead by example as role models for other Albertans.

Role modelling can only be accomplished if the sincerity of what is being said is matched by actions reflected in government's policy and approach to multiculturalism. It was suggested the Commission be given whatever autonomy and authority it requires to facilitate these changes.

Empowerment

As in other areas of government, it was anticipated that funding for multicultural activities may be reduced. This was a concern, yet supporters of multiculturalism said programs could be sustained by local communities and organizations if an appropriate level of training and support was provided on an on-going basis.

A significant component of MAP's implementation was helping Albertans take ownership over multicultural policy and program development. The Commission did this by forming dozens of partnerships with ethnocultural communities and organizations like the United Way of Calgary and District, the Royal Bank of Canada and Alberta Vocational College, Edmonton.

However, some communities, particularly native groups, remain isolated from society because of the barriers they face. These exclusions contribute to the feeling that government policy is preferential. We were reminded that multicultural policy must recognize and include the needs of all Albertans.

"The need for language fluency and cultural awareness is of primary importance to young people and business concerns if they are to compete and succeed in a global marketplace,"

Review '93 participant

"Canadians have good reason to feel pleased with ourselves when it comes to multiculturalism. The world is very interested in what Canada has tried to do,"

Walter Uegama Associate V-P and Director of continuing Studies, UBC

Many people who came to the Review '93 meetings spoke of subtle, systemic discrimination in the workplace. We were encouraged to continue our work in lifting cultural barriers to work opportunities. The Commission's Managing Diversity program was seen as a viable alternative to a legislated employment equity approach because it addresses the root causes of cultural barriers within organizations, and works with those organizations to change the culture of the organization. However, some participants wanted the government to more aggressively promote the principles of employment equity.

Learning the English language was considered vital for individuals wishing to fully participate in Alberta society. Heritage Language programs help Albertans to be more productive at home and more effective in international trade, said participants. For these reasons, we were told both English as a Second Language (ESL) and Heritage Languages should be considered fundamental programs and made more accessible to Albertans through the province's educational systems.

Conclusion

For the most part, the issues raised during Review '93 were seen as symptoms of an overriding problem - lack of knowledge concerning cultural diversity and its benefits.

Albertans can not be expected to change their attitudes and behaviours if they do not know how cultural diversity impacts their lives, said participants. We were told to put even more effort into raising awareness and understanding among all citizens.

Other countries study Canada's multicultural society in order to emulate a nation described as one of the best places in the world to live. As is the case for most Canadians, many Albertans do not appreciate the advantages of our non-homogeneous society, said participants.

Awareness through education was seen as the key to demonstrating there is economic and social benefit to a diverse society. If individuals and organizations can be shown that cultural diversity is good for the province, it was felt that access to employment, public service, business and institutional opportunities would improve and that Albertans, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, would enjoy the opportunity to participate in all aspects of Alberta life.

Section III

Government & Community Factors

"Given the increasing racial diversity of Canada's population... companies that are insensitive to human rights issues will find a very reduced labour pool from which to hire. Those employers who don't adapt to the new Canadian reality will become the economic dinosaurs of the future,"

Orest Kruhlak, Executive Director, Laurier Institute, Vancouver

The document Seizing Opportunities, Alberta's New Economic Development Strategy, says exports and tourism are expected to be the vanguard of Alberta's economic recovery. The Government of Alberta has set an objective of generating an additional $6.4 billion in revenue and creating 92,800 new jobs within these two areas during the next few years.

To accomplish these goals and sustain a strong and vibrant economy, Alberta will need a well-managed workforce and stable social environment.

Diversity

The majority of new entrants to the labour force will largely come from non-traditional sources: women, aboriginal people, visible minorities and persons with disabilities. By the year 2000, it is estimated that more than 80% of new entrants into the workforce will come from these sources. The Canadian Advertising Foundation estimates Edmonton and Calgary will have 25% of their populations composed of people from visible minority groups by the year 2001.

Business leaders recognize our province will continue to become more and more culturally diverse. Hundreds of Alberta companies are experiencing rapid change within their organizations and among their clients and customers. To remain competitive at home and abroad, a growing number of Alberta companies have introduced, or are planning to introduce, programs which help them deal effectively with diversity issues.

These programs enable companies to appreciate the nuances of an altered social and economic environment. People with different cultural backgrounds can be a key resource in the growth of foreign trade and tourism.

Opportunities

"An awareness of the global competitive environment also requires an appreciation of other cultures and political systems. Ideally, Canada's multicultural society can serve as a model for social and economic development,"

Professor V. Ujimoto, University of Guelph

New trade markets created by NAFTA, the U.S.S.R's demise and recent Pacific Rim negotiations places some urgency on Alberta industries and the Government of Alberta to properly utilize our diverse population and workforce. Recognizing market potential or opportunities is less important than knowing the cultural sensitivities of a new marketplace. Skills in this area are usually crucial to making a sale, producing an acceptable product and keeping the customer satisfied.

A diverse workforce capable of delivering products and services to a global consumer group is also important in attracting investment and tourism to the province. Cultural diversity programming, like the 10,000 students annually enrolled in Heritage Language studies, plays a key role in harnessing the potential of our local human resources.

Organizations who recognize the need to modify policies, systems and management practices to accommodate today's diverse workforce and world market-place reap dividends in efficiency, productivity and innovation. It gives these organizations - and Alberta as a whole - a competitive edge over many other societies around the world.

Understanding the benefits of diversity, and managing it well, presents a tremendous opportunity for Alberta's industrial and community infrastructure. Seizing this opportunity is one of the reasons the Alberta Multiculturalism Act was created.

Coordination

"You can dread the future or relish its changes. The only effective plan is planning for change,"

John Yerxa, The 1994 Yerxa Report

To compete internationally and sustain our quality of life at home, it's imperative that government inform and advise business, institutions, and communities about "the Alberta advantage" of being a culturally diverse society.

In order to do this, the Government of Alberta needs to show a renewed commitment to the values a diverse society represents. The Commission must work with elected officials, government departments and agencies to help them become role models for other Albertans.

"The issues of racism, valuing diversity at the workplace and corporate and community involvement is of concern to everyone who cares for the well-being of this province. Racism must be addressed, which I believe can be the biggest challenge for the Commission,"

Review '93 participant

"Government must become a facilitator and integrator, rather than being directly involved in the lives of the people and private sector,"

Towards 2000 Together Report

To increase service effectiveness and eliminate duplications, we must coordinate our efforts with other government agencies and organizations who have crossover mandates in areas like anti-racism education and diversity training.

Too many Albertans are the victims of overt expressions of discrimination and racism. Many Albertans also face subtle silent barriers in work, education and community life.

These Albertans do not feel their efforts to contribute and participate in society are appreciated. Such barriers weaken the province's social fabric and, ultimately, its economic strength. It is incumbent upon government to take a lead role in dismantling these barriers.

Leadership can be demonstrated by focusing attention on the resolution of diversity issues which hinder social development, economic growth and community well-being. The Commission can help in this regard by assuming a leadership and coordination role in the battle against racism and discrimination.

Self-reliance

Stabilized revenues and rising expenditures have led the Government of Alberta to introduce new fiscal policies which ask Albertans to expect less from government and be more self-reliant. All sectors of our society, from individuals to large institutions, are expected to take more responsibility for meeting the needs of their local community.

As organizations and community groups have a primary role in dealing with diversity issues and can best identify local needs and solutions, they are willing to accept this challenge if given the proper support. They will need on-going advice, training and guidance that is accessible, affordable and coordinated.

"Government's role is not to dictate, but to facilitate the discovery of made-in-Alberta solutions,"

Speech from the Throne, August, 1993

As a government agency, we have an obligation to find ways of reducing or offsetting our costs. Existing and future products and services should continue to be made available to non-profit organizations in Alberta at little or no cost. However, opportunities to generate revenue by marketing programs and knowledge to for-profit companies or out-of-province interests should be pursued.

Partnerships

The Commission has known for a long time that bringing about a province-wide understanding of the benefits of cultural diversity requires the cooperative effort of many individuals, government departments, community groups and organizations. For example, school-based efforts to communicate facts about the impact of a culturally diverse society must be balanced with community education for the public-at-large.

Our most successful programs, including Managing Diversity and Cultural Ambassadors, involve partnerships with corporations, community organizations and other government departments. Partnerships are more effective and efficient than unilateral approaches because resources and commitment are shared. A group or organization is much more likely to implement changes and maintain them if they have had a hand in their development.

The Commission and many of its partners have worked together to assemble a wealth of expertise, resources and information that is marketable to other jurisdictions. Many Alberta organizations are developing their own internal staff resources to meet the growing need for expertise in this area. And communities like Provost and Red Deer have identified and implemented solutions which meet the specific needs of their local areas.

Community

Organizations, groups, and local communities can be successful, with the proper support, in developing and delivering diversity programs. MAP began the groundwork that would enable communities and organizations to assume responsibility for identifying their needs and implementing solutions - under the umbrella of a provincial policy on multiculturalism.

"When governments push ownership and control into the community, their responsibilities do not end. They may no longer produce services, but they are still responsible for making sure needs are met. When governments abdicate this steering responsibility, disaster often follows,"

***David Osborne and Ted Gaebler in the book* Reinventing Government**

Once completed, this groundwork would allow the Commission to diminish its involvement in cultural diversity programming. However, we must ensure a solid, community-based model is in place before that occurs. To be viable, this community model must be adequately resourced to serve a broad cross-section of needs.

Moving to such a community-based model is consistent with the Department of Community Development and Government of Alberta's key principle of customer driven government. This principle is based on the premise that government should lead by example, facilitating - but not dictating - solutions.

Empowering others to deliver programs places ownership of bringing about cultural understanding and acceptance at the community level. It allows organizations and communities to take a leadership role and government to diminish its involvement over time.

A community model for program development and delivery does not mean the end of the government's responsibility in this area. The Commission will be needed to advise government, business, and community organizations on issues pertaining to the growing diversity in Alberta. Albertans will also continue to need an advocate for multiculturalism policy within government.

Conclusion

Cultural diversity offers the promise of economic and social growth for all Albertans. Fulfilling the promise is not a natural occurance but one which requires a committed, coordinated effort on the part of government, business, communities and individuals. As in all things, reward does not come without investment. There is little question continued investment in cultural diversity would result in large dividends for Alberta, now and in the future.

Section IV

Members of the Commission Board

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